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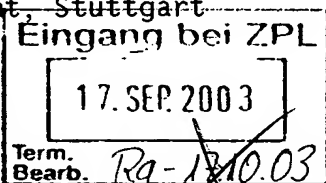
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03290586.1-2411-

Anmelder/Applicant/Demandeur/Patentinhaber/Propriétaire/Titulaire

ALCATEL

COMMUNICATION

The European Patent Office herewith transmits as an enclosure the European search report for the above-mentioned European patent application.

If applicable, copies of the documents cited in the European search report are attached.

☐ Additional set(s) of copies of the documents cited in the European search report is (are) enclosed as well.

The following specifications given by the applicant have been approved by the Search Division:

☐ abstract

☒ title

☒ The abstract was modified by the Search Division and the definitive text is attached to this communication.

The following figure will be published together with the abstract:

1

REFUND OF THE SEARCH FEE

If applicable under Article 10 Rules relating to fees, a separate communication from the Receiving Section on the refund of the search fee will be sent later.





DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X	US 6 236 726 B1 (DARVEAU MICHEL F J) 22 May 2001 (2001-05-22) * column 2, line 8 - line 17; figures 1,4 *	1-7	H04B3/50 H04L25/03
A	US 6 212 229 B1 (SALINGER SHELDON NORMAN) 3 April 2001 (2001-04-03) * abstract *	1-7	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			H04L H04B
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search MUNICH		Date of completion of the search 1 September 2003	Examiner Bauer, F
<div>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</div> <div><div>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</div><div>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</div></div>			

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 03 29 0586

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

01-09-2003

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 6236726	B1	22-05-2001	NONE
US 6212229	B1	03-04-2001	AU 3122900 A 03-07-2000
		EP 1142171 A1 10-10-2001	
		NO 20012969 A 15-08-2001	
		WO 0036768 A1 22-06-2000	



ABSTRACT / ZUSAMMENFASSUNG / ABREGE

03290586.1

This invention (6) provides an attenuation arrangement (6) for ADSL signals fed from a remote point (11) wherein an attenuator (6) is inserted between a remotely located ADSL LT unit (7) and the line, the attenuation arrangement being for the purpose of reducing the mismatch of downstream power level of the ADSL LT unit (7) and downstream power level of other ADSL signals sharing the same cable bundle but fed from a more distant point (1,2).



This application is covered by the extended European search report pilot project at present running within the European Patent Office, applied to all European patent applications filed as first filing and searched on or after 01.07.03. Under this project the EPO issues together with the search report an opinion on whether the application and the invention to which it relates meet the requirements of the EPC. This non-binding opinion is issued free of charge as a service. This opinion may be used as the basis for an informed decision as to whether it is desired to pursue the application further or not.

For further details of this pilot project, the applicant's attention is directed to the Official Journal edition 5/2003. If any further immediate questions or comments arise the EPO Customer Services: +31-70-340 4500 or +49-89-2399 2828 can be contacted.

The attached opinion reveals that the application or the invention to which it relates appear not to meet the requirements of the Convention (see comments on enclosed Form 2906).

If the applicant wishes to continue with this application the examination fee must be paid. Where appropriate amendments can be filed to address the objections raised in the opinion, thus shortening the overall procedure. If no amendments are filed, the opinion will be re-issued as the first official communication under Article 96(2) and Rule 51(2) EPC.

If the examination fee has already been paid and the right to the communication under Article 96(1) EPC has been waived for this application, the first official communication under Article 96(2) and Rule 51(2) EPC will be issued promptly.



The examination is being carried out on the **following application documents**:

Text for the Contracting States:

AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HU IE IT LU MC NL PT SE SI SK TR LI RO

Description, pages:

1-6 as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-7 as originally filed

Drawings, sheets:

1/3-3/3 as originally filed

Comments:

* numbered by the examiner.

1. Reference is made to the following documents:

D1: US-B1-6236726

D2: US-B1-6212229.

2. a) The subject-matter of **claim 1** refers to an attenuation arrangement for ADSL signals. However, reference are made to a remotely located ADSL line termination unit, to a line, downstream power levels of the ADSL LT unit and of other ADSL signals, to a distant point... which are not part of the claimed arrangement. Thus, the arrangement is not defined in terms of its technical features. Therefore, the intended limitations are therefore not clear from this claim, contrary to the requirements of **Article 84 EPC**.

b) This objection could for example be overcome by claiming a system comprising the attenuator, the ADSL LT units and the cable or by claiming a method of



reducing mismatch of downstream power level of an ADSL LT unit.

3. a) Notwithstanding this lack of clarity, the subject-matter of **claim 1** of the present application does not involve an inventive step (Article 56 EPC) for the following reasons.

b) D1 (fig. 1) discloses an ADSL system comprising a cable bundle (14) fed from a distant point (10) to a receiving unit 40.

c) The problem solved by the invention can be seen as providing a second ADSL LT unit on the same cable bundle, closer to the unit 40.

The skilled man, confronted with this problem, would take a second ADSL LT unit and connect it to the cable. According to the teaching of D1 (abstract), he would know that the ADSL signals attenuate with the distance (col. 2, lines 8-17).

Although D1 is about the power level problems on the upstream signals, it is obvious that, in the case of a plurality of ADSL LT units, a similar problem would arise for the downstream signals, see also D2, abstract.

Therefore, the skilled man would have to place an attenuator between the second ADSL LT unit and the cable bund, in order for all the downstream signals to have the same levels, thereby arriving at the claimed invention.

d) Therefore, the subject-matter of **claim 1** of the present application does not involve an inventive step (Article 56 EPC).

4. The subject-matter of **claims 2-7** of the present application cannot be considered as involving an inventive step, because it merely consists in the juxtaposition or association of known devices or characteristics functioning in their normal way and not producing any non-obvious working inter-relationship.
5. a) It is not at present apparent which part of the application could serve as a basis for a new, allowable claim. Should the applicant nevertheless regard some particular matter as patentable an independent claim including such matter should



be filed taking account of Rule 29(1) EPC.

b) The applicant should also indicate in the letter of reply the difference of the subject-matter of the new claim vis-à-vis the state of the art (D1 to D2) and the significance thereof.

c) New claims should be written in the two-part form, with the preamble based on the nearest prior art document (presently considered to be D1), in order to fulfill Rule 29(1) EPC. When possible, dependent claims should be used (Rule 29 (4)).

d) To meet the requirements of Rule 27(1)(b) EPC, the documents D1 to D2 should be identified in the description and the relevant background art disclosed therein should be briefly discussed.

e) Reference signs in parentheses should be inserted in the claims to increase their intelligibility, Rule 29(7) EPC. This applies to both the preamble and characterising portion (see the Guidelines, C-III, 4.11).

f) When filing amended claims the applicant should at the same time bring the description into conformity with the amended claims. Care should be taken during revision, especially of the introductory portion and any statements of problem or advantage, not to add subject-matter which extends beyond the content of the application as originally filed (Article 123(2) EPC).

g) In order to facilitate the examination of the conformity of the amended application with the requirements of Article 123(2) EPC, the applicant is requested to clearly identify the amendments carried out, irrespective of whether they concern amendments by addition, replacement or deletion, and to indicate the passages of the application as filed on which these amendments are based. If the applicant regards it as appropriate these indications could be submitted in handwritten form on a copy of the relevant parts of the application as filed.